

A DISSERTATION,
In Answer to a late LECTURE
ON THE 2
Political State of AMERICA,

Read in NEW-HAVEN, January 12th, 1789,

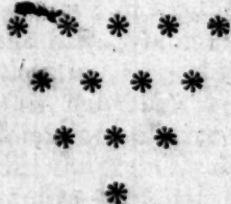
During the adjourned Sessions of the Honorable
Legislature.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A short POEM spoken at the same Time.

By WILLIAM HILLHOUSE, jun. Esq.

ATTORNEY AT LAW.



NEW-HAVEN—Printed by T. & S. GREEN.

A DISSERTATION
IN ANSWER TO A LATE LECTURE
ON THE
POLITICAL STATE OF AMERICA

Read in New-York, January 1783.
During the absence of the Honorable
J. Jay, Esq.
To which is added,
A short account of the late Treaty.



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Printed by J. Johnson, in Pall-mall.

THE defects of the old Articles of Confederation were universally felt, and acknowledged, and a dissolution of the federal Compact appeared to be the inevitable consequence, of a pertinacious adherence, to a system so inadequate. It neither provided the means of internal safety, nor external defence. A truth so apparent, that those who oppose the present system, do not rely on the old "Articles of Confederation:" but as there is no alternative, boldly assert that a dissolution of the Union, would be preferable to an efficient federal Government.

The indulgence of a candid Audience, is therefore requested, while we revert to the enquiry, Is an efficient federal Government essential to the peace and happiness of this country?

I am sensible that a subject which has been so often handled, like a thrice told tale, palls upon the sense: Yet as I cannot chuse my field, and as the path is pointed out in which I must follow—their patience is solicited: and besides, however irksome the discussion, the subject is of importance.

My audience will likewise pardon the many inaccuracies which will appear, in a hasty dissertation; as many circumstances prevented an attention to the subject till within a short time.

The design of government is to protect the life and property of the subject, and that government best answers the purposes of its institution which most effectually secures the enjoyment of these; with the least possible impeachment or diminution.

The reasons which urge to an Union, go to the very essence of government, and involve in them the only means of providing for our external security and defence, or our internal safety and peace.

An extensive ocean, it is true, separates the eastern, from this western hemisphere, and many from thence infer, that nature has placed between them an insuperable barrier; and that our political measures should have no reference to the measures there pursued. But has she placed an insuperable barrier between their commercial interest, and ours? or has she restricted the objects of ambitious pursuit? In the first division of the subject, the protection of commerce strikes the mind, as an object peculiarly important.

In the prosecution of this, our vessels are already lead to traverse seas contiguous to the dominions of every maritime power in Europe; and to circumscribe the globe. And what can protect the adventurers in such extensive pursuits, from the insults of the haughty, the restrictions of the designing, or the depredations of the lawless; but a respectable national character, and a sufficient national force?

That the potentates of Europe are possessed of this haughty demeanor, I need not assert; nor that many of these look with a jealous eye, on the rising greatness of this country, as being one day

day capable of rivaling and perhaps supplanting them in their most favorite plans of commerce. These from motives of pride, rivalry, and interest, will oppose its progress. And what nation will submit to the insults of the haughty, the impositions of the designing, or the depredations of the lawless, merely from a jealousy of each other? Americans will not. What has encouraged the exactions and impositions to which we have been obliged to submit, but our own weakness! What, but this, has emboldened a nest of pirates on the Barbary coast, to capture our merchantmen, and massacre their crews, or drag them into a slavery worse than death!—Do not the lives, and sufferings of our countrymen, (thus massacred and enslaved) call aloud for indignation and vengeance, rather than for the stipulated reward of treacherous cruelty!

While a contracted policy, and jealousy induce the powers of Europe to tolerate—to foster in their bosoms such stains to humanity; the Union will enable America to wipe them from the escutcheon of mankind.

I am sensible that many of the advocates for the power of annihilation, aware of the truth and force of these observations, strike at the root, and deny the necessity of commerce: and would consider the people of this country——

“As fix’d like plants to some peculiar spot,

To suck nutrition, propagate and rot”——

But why has the Almighty implanted in their breast, the spirit of enterprize; which no people in the universe seem to possess in a higher degree? And from whence are we to be supplied with the various exotic productions, which are not merely conducive to the enjoyment, but to the preservation of life? Were we to depend on a precarious importation from foreigners, we should find ourselves much more in their power than we now are; and obliged to submit to frauds and impositions, both as to value and quality, of their merchandize. Unable to furnish ourselves, they would send such as would answer no other markets; and in such scanty supplies as to demand their own price. Besides the produce of our country, tho’ of the most substantial kind, is such as almost every country affords, and foreigners might not find such a want of this as to induce the necessity of an application here. Especially as those powers, who are possessed of adjacent territory, would, for the purposes of emolument to themselves, and detriment to us, endeavour to supply every market with the avails of their own colonies.

By restricting commerce, we should cut off the life and source of industry; and pave the way for indolence, and a train of vices more destructive to community, than those arts of elegance and refinement (which it is said, and justly said) are the concomitants of commerce. For no people will raise more than is sufficient for
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their own consumption, and to supply the demands of foreign markets. To evince this, I appeal to those countries, which by their situation, are secluded from the benefits of commerce, or which have not the spirit to avail themselves of their local advantages : Such being generally sunk in ignorance, effeminacy and vice. And to what cause are we to impute the disparity observable between the improved nations of Europe, and the most ignorant Horde of Tartars, or the most effeminate people of China or India, but to that spirit of enterprize, which animates the intercourse of the former, and a destitution which sinks the latter below the level of man ?

In the first stages of society, and when uncivilized by the arts of refinement, mankind are in a state of hostility, and wage war as uniformly as the beasts of the forest engage. Ancient Europe, and modern America, afford striking specimens of this. To meliorate the ferocity natural to the human mind, to enlarge its faculties, to eradicate local prejudices, and to extend the principles of toleration, are the effects of commercial intercourse.

A communication with foreign powers, will, on the principle of an equilibrium, attract from countries overstock'd with inhabitants, and thus prove a fruitful source of population an object of the greatest importance in a territory of such extensive limits. But without an efficient federal government, even this would not take effect, as those who have been accustomed to a regular administration, consider a permanent system as of the utmost importance, and the security of property as the great object of society. Nor can our commerce be retrieved, or placed on a respectable footing, but by general measures wisely concerted and strictly adhered to.

The Briton on the North, the Spaniard on the South, and the Savage on the West, add weight to these suggestions, and speak more forcibly the necessity of uniting.

It is to little purpose to say that we are separated from the two first by a watery tract of three thousand miles extent ; when by their territorial claims in this country they are bro't to our neighbourhood. By means of these it will be more peculiarly in their power to annoy our trade, and obstruct our fisheries, which, if protected, might prove the means of support to the industrious, and a source of wealth to the community. And have they not shewn a disposition to avail themselves of every circumstance to our disadvantage ? They prohibit us the navigation of the seas and the entrance of rivers common to both ; they exclude us their harbours ; and to enforce these mortifying restrictions, seize our vessels with instances of conduct the most cruel and unjust, and even insult our weakness by withholding those places ceded to us by the treaty of peace, and which might be some security against further encroachments. " If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry !" If these things are done when we

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are in some measure united, what may we not expect when disunited and perhaps contending among ourselves? Our apprehensions will be further awakened on this subject when we consider, that by their increase of power in these settlements which continually populate, they may at some future period endanger our existence as states.

The dread of the savage tribes extends, at present, no farther than to those places immediately exposed to their predatory incursions. At some future period however, they may excite a more serious alarm. Their dominion is even now over empires still unexplored, and they possess all that devoted attachment to the national cause, that martial enthusiasm and patience of fatigue which have always constituted the most essential ingredients in military achievement. 'Twas thus the Romans were invincible, and by these united with a religious zeal, the Moors, the Arabs, and the Saracens form'd that irresistible torrent, which under Mahomet and his successors, with a desolating force overspread half the world. And the want of effect so conspicuous in the present operations of the savage tribes, ought to be imputed more to their want of union, and consequent desultory mode of attack, than to any other cause; but should some Tamerlane arise among their scattered Hordes, they might still be formidable, especially if assisted by the neighbouring powers.

Such are the dangers which threaten from without; and shall we tamely submit to every exaction, and neglect to provide the means of defence; or shall we not avail ourselves of our own natural advantages?—That general measures only can operate effectually to these great purposes, and that an efficient federal government is necessary in concerting or enforcing a compliance with these, is evident from the conduct of the states even during the war. In times of danger, individual interest is forgotten in the general concern. And the war we should suppose would have been a sufficient memento to the states to act in concert and in conformity to the general measures: Yet this was not found sufficient. Many of the states during the period of the utmost danger, were totally regardless of the general interest and safety—seeking amidst the common calamity to promote their own particular views, and to establish claims in themselves unjust, and leaving the states destitute of the means of supporting even defensive operations, (such was the contrariety of interests) and those seeds of disaffection and dissention had then taken root, the rapid growth of which has since occasioned the most serious alarm.

And suffer me now to call your attention to those considerations which come still nearer, and which arise within the states themselves.

“Neighbouring nations,” says a writer of note, “are natural enemies to each other.” Jealousy of power, and contrariety of interest

interest are sufficient to awaken an apprehension of injury, and experience proves how often this rises into action ; to which source may be traced almost every war of which history treats. And the more nearly they are connected, the more inveterate is their animosity ; unless there exists a general power as a common arbiter. Greece, while divided into distinct states, and till subjected by a foreign power, exhibited a continued scene of horror, bloodshed and confusion. England during the Heptarchy, and England & Scotland till the Union, exhibited a similar scene. But not to multiply examples from the same causes, may we not expect similar effects ? And ought we not to use every precaution to guard against such an event ? War is dreadful ! but shield thou Guardian Power this country from the horrors of civil discord ! And when we find in addition to those which generally exist, many causes of dissention peculiar to these states ; our apprehension of the consequences, and endeavors to guard against these should be proportionably increased. A rivalry in trade, and the imposts and exactions of particular states, would prove no inconsiderable source of animosity. The territory ceded to the Union by the treaty, would be an object, and probably the subject of contention. The interfering claims of different states to the same territory would lead to a similar issue. The general debt of the confederacy both from the mode of adjustment, and mode of payment, would involve many difficulties ; the inability of some states, the disaffection or dishonesty of others, would each occasion deficiencies & delays, which would excite the clamors of domestic creditors, and the resentment of states more punctual in their engagements ; while foreign creditors would probably speak a more energetic language, and by the assistance of national authority, resort to a compulsory recompence.

It is suggested, that there can be no danger of a war between these States, as they could derive no advantage therefrom. Nor are the combatants in private quarrels benefited thereby ; yet both states and individuals will resort the *ultima ratio*. But wars it is said are undertaken to gratify the ambitious projects of a few, and the people have no concern in their origin. I believe we shall find, however, that most wars have originated, from the disposition of the people ; whose resentment generally anticipates the views of their rulers ; & often contrary to their wish, precipitates them into measures in conformity thereto. Instances of this occur frequently in the history of England and other countries. This spirit is most prevalent in popular governments, and these most frequently undertake wars from petty provocations and trifling causes, being more under the influence of turbulence and faction. The examples of Greece, Carthage, the states of Italy, and the United Netherlands, authorize this assertion. It is again, however urged, that from the mild effects of the Christian Religion, or from some other cause, the ferocity of mankind is softened, and
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that they are much less inclined to war than in former ages.—I have heard of an individual, but never of a national Christian, and the frequent and recent instances which we have of the contrary disposition in the examples above refer'd to, and others which might be adduced, sufficiently refute the assertion, and prove that mankind are still the same.—But we come now to the great specific of these political quacks—the people of these States (say they) are too wise, and just to contend with each other. Altho' the Utopian idea of the reign of reason and perfect justice is long since exploded; yet these visionaries adopt an idea equally absurd. A review of the conduct of the States, and the situation of the country when the Convention met, will correct this erroneous hypothesis, and furnish additional motives to embrace the Union. The total neglect of particular states, even in time of danger, to provide their quotas for the common defence, discover'd the folly, of mere requisition. An avoidance of many of the articles of the treaty, by several states, involved the residue in the disagreeable consequences of a fresh breach of national faith; shewed how far their political honesty might be relied on, and would at some future period have been attended with more serious effects; and I wish this State did not justly come under the imputation. In fine, the ruin of our trade, our ship-yards deserted, our harbours without shipping, the loss of public credit, the poverty of our country, and the burdens of the day, were but a small part of the catalogue of our distresses.

The political horoscope wore a most threatening aspect—the cloud of discontent hung over our heads like the flaming sword over the devoted city; and the rushing, rough blast of commotion already prognosticated, the bursting of the storm! States stood watching with eager looks, and waiting for the signal of onset; and had, e'er this, unsheathed their swords in their divisions against each other, or in their rebellions against themselves. Anarchy, with his many heads, and Discord, with her flaming torches, were discovered in all their ghastly shapes, and the welkin involv'd in a darker gloom, presented in prospect, the country desolated with all the horrors, and distresses of civil war! But the recital is painful—And hide, oh! hide from view, the hideous group! and see the curtain drops—the spirit of conciliation hovers o'er the land! and the Sun of union has arisen!

Such, and many additional reasons which might be suggested, urge the necessity of an efficient federal government. The objections to such a system will now claim your attention.

“That the system is new, and that every innovation is dangerous and detrimental,” like many suggestions of bigotted form-wise politicians, arises from want of information; or that incorrigible temper, which induces its votaries to reject every improvement of modern date; and every truth which their grand mothers have not taught them.

It is from this principle that certain nations still adhere to those preposterous customs, which their fore-fathers had practised. It is from this principle that the disciples of Mahomet & Confucius reverence the chapter of the Sheep, and believe in the doctrine of the Avesta,—The thunders of the Conclave and the flames of the Inquisition were long level'd at the germe of inquiry & blighted the expanding bud : And even the inventors or abettors of the true system of the universe were oblig'd to renounce the discovery as a dangerous heresy.

This disposition will equally arrest the progress of arts and the progress of truth : reason becomes the dupe of prejudice, deductions vain, and every disquisition civil or religious ends in thus it has been held and so believed. Nothing so much as this prevents man from being as perfect as reason can make him ; nothing so much as this the universal spread of truth. When, Oh when shall the time arrive that the inhabitant of the Ganges and the Rio de la Plate shall acknowledge the same belief ! then shall prejudice, bigotry and illusion be dissipated, this and this shall be the reign of truth !

‘ But why (it is said) should we wish for a change of system, since no people in the universe are happier than were the people of these, and of this state in particular, under the former arrangement ?’ A change of circumstances renders necessary a change of measures. We were formerly a minor under the tuition of a guardian ; we are now an independent state ; and the other states are alike situated : we must now consider, and treat them, for such will be their conduct to us, as rivals in interest and power, or as equals and confederates. We have found how totally inadequate the former system of confederation has proved ; and how many objects of rivalry may arise. Should we not therefore endeavour to avoid the mischiefs which we have experienced, and others which may ensue ? And why should the accidental or arbitrary lines drawn by Great-Britain, in the division or distribution of this country still be adhered to, if found inconvenient ? Is it to gratify a preposterous habit or attachment ? or to subserve the purposes of certain individuals, interested in the continuance of the state establishments ?

‘ The territory of these States, (say the objectors) is too large for a republican form of government.’ That a republican form of government, is calculated only for small districts, is an idea derived by not attending to the distinction between a democracy, and a republic.

In a democracy, the people deliberate in a body ; in a republic, they may act by their representatives. There are many writers, and among those of modern authority, Montesquieu, Hume, Price, Adams and others, who point out a republic, or a confederated republic, as the most eligible form of government, for an extensive territory.

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" But how (it is said) will the people know those whom they elect to office." To obviate this, the choice may be, and in fact by the present Constitution, is made by districts or states. And the acquaintance which those appointed have with each part of the Confederacy, will enable them to judge of the resources of each.

"That no general rule of taxation can be devised, to operate equally thro' the states," is an objection which may be made, to every mode of taxation, in the most petty district; and in the present instance is premature. The resources of the confederated whole, will be considerable, by the sale of the unappropriated lands—by imposts & other sumptuary regulations, which to the separate states, or to the states when divided into partial confederacies, would be sunk to nothing, for want of some general rule of collection, or which would be worse squandered in a contention to decide the right, or rather the power of appropriation: for in such cases the power would commonly decide the right. By an œconomical application of these resources, direct taxation for the exigencies of the union may be avoided. Nor is it an idea that it will be necessary, unless on some unforeseen emergency, which it is hoped will never take place.

In answer to these, some of the advantages of an extensive, confederate republic will be adverted to, and on this subject the venerable Montesquieu observes, " There is a kind of government possessed of all the internal advantages of a republic and external force of a monarchy. This is a confederate republic, being a convention, by which several smaller states agree to become members of a larger one, and is an assemblage of societies capable of increasing by new associations.

A republic of this kind, able to withstand external force, may subsist without internal corruption, and by its form, prevents all manner of inconveniencies.

The intrigues of party will not influence public decisions, as in a small district; nor has an individual that opportunity to raise himself above the controul of the law. " Should a popular insurrection happen in one of the confederated states, the others are able to quell it. Should abuses creep into one part, they are reformed by those that remain sound." And such a government, composed of small republics enjoys the internal happiness of each."

But why, (it may be asked) if such are the advantages, of an extensive, confederate republic, have we not more frequent instances of these, among the nations of the world?—It would be an herculean task, unless every circumstance favour'd the event, to persuade the people of any extensive territory, to submit to an uniform plan, or system of government. So uncertain the popular decision, and so different their opinions, on the most common, and yet interesting subjects. Of this we had sufficient evidence in the late public deliberations; in which, however, a remarkable co-

incidence of circumstances occur'd. By contrasting the situation of this, and other countries, we shall find reasons which would here justify the wish, and would there preclude the possibility of success.

Here a similarity of language prevailed; there a confusion or contrariety of languages soon took place; strong prejudices and local attachments had not here taken root, as was the case with other countries at a much earlier period than that of which history treats; here the people were at liberty to deliberate; there the people were shackled with despotic forms, and bound in chains beyond the possibility of reprieve, before government was considered as an art: before they had deliberated on the subject, or even considered themselves as interested in the decision. Here a general toleration of religious sentiment and an uniformity of principle was a most happy omen. There systems of bigotry and a spirit of intolerance had early closed the avenues of coalition. Yet even there Henry the Great, and Fourth of France, and Elizabeth, of illustrious memory, form'd the plan of a confederate republic, comprehending the powers of Europe. Happy would it have been for mankind had this system of philanthropy taken place; it would have done away that contracted policy, and by constituting a common arbiter, have eradicated those seeds of jealousy, which had before, and which have since involved the nations in many a bloody conflict.

If such the happy concurrence of circumstances, how unpardonable should we be to neglect the present opportunity to establish the peace and freedom of an extensive continent? Such an event, by creating a balance in favor of universal liberty, would constitute America the common arbiter and avenger of the injured rights of mankind, and constrain the kings and rulers of the earth to "reign with more mildness and mercy."

Some, however, object to the form of the confederacy, and assert, 'that a connexion with the southern states will precipitate us into many disagreeable consequences.' We should suppose by the language held forth on this occasion, that any correspondence with them would be attended with a contagious effect; but experience on the trial discovers advantages both political and moral in the union.

'Their ideas of government, it is said, are carried much beyond our principle or ability.' This objection, like many others, is unfounded in fact, and made to excite the apprehensions of the uninformed. Were not the governments in the southern and northern states equally democratical? and are they not equally so at the present time, and the spirit of the people equally opposed to the encroachments of an Aristocracy?

It is said, "they are depraved." In every country indeed there is a mixture of the virtuous and vicious; but are those who sug-

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gest this without a fault?—Precious immaculates!—But you are not obliged to contract from them their vicious habits, either by a moral necessity, or by the articles of the compact!

To correct, however, an opinion so erroneous, as that the Southern States are remarkably depraved, we need only point to the many exemplary, and illustrious characters, who from that part of the union, during the late war, guided the councils of America; and directed her arms. And among these we contemplate with pleasure, the most distinguished ornament of the present age, his country's boast; and since the mystic, Heaven's best gift to man.

“They are rich” it is said, “and we poor.” But do we not find the same simplicity of manners generally prevalent thro’ the whole? and is not the uniformity surprising, making allowance for the difference of climate, and the frequent accession of foreigners there made?—Are they not brothers,—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, for many of their leading men are from among us; speaking the same language, and differing less than people of the same district often differ in other countries? Indeed, I consider the difference which subsists, as a happy circumstance. We can supply each other with the productions of every climate; if they are possessed of a more profitable staple, and import more freely, we shall partake of the benefits of an import arising therefrom: they will add to our resources, and we shall add to their strength. Besides, erecting distinct confederacies, would be creating powerful rivals; and presenting them with arms, which soon they would plunge to each others hearts.

“But this will induce” it is said, “the necessity of paying the national debt.” And have they the effrontery to urge this as a reason against its adoption? If it will enforce a compliance with the calls of justice and humanity, it will, and certainly ought to have the suffrage of every honest mind; a neglect of which has already deprived the decrepid, the widow, and the fatherless, of that pittance for which they had suffered—for which their husbands and fathers had bled; and constrained them to pine in silence, and solitude, the want of that little all; which altho’ it could not have dried their tears, might have relieved their distress. May the time arrive, when their acknowledgements shall arise, like incense before the throne of the great Avenger of wrongs, and with the effusions of gratitude, wash away the record of their sufferings!

“But the tendency of this system, say its opposers, is to form a national character, and to give these states a degree of importance and weight with the other powers, and no nation which is or aims to be great can be happy.”—Be little and be happy, is their motto. I had always imbibed an idea, that a good character was beneficial both to nations and to individuals. If to be
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contemptible and insignificant contributes to their felicity, they are in the direct road to the accomplishment of their wishes : God grant, however, that this country may never practise the principles which they inculcate." "But is not this (they ask) a mere bubble, in which the great body of the people are not interested, and by which a few only are benefited?" A national character is the soul of society, and each individual feels its influence ; it is like blood to the human body of which every part partakes.—And ill betides the state whose meanest subject is not jealous of her rights, and emulous of her glory : it is the firmest bulwark of the commonwealth.—The ideas of a Roman and his country were inseparable ; and a British tar will sacrifice his life for the honor of Old-England. Nor is the son of Columbia deaf to her calls ? follow him to his cottage which he has rear'd by his industry, and from which he has taught the forest to retire ; is not this dear to him ? would it be so if, under the despot of Constantinople, or dey of Algiers ? And is it not doubly dear for his country's sake ? View him in the little circle of his family and neighbours ; he recounts the names of those who have done honor to their country ; he recites their actions ; and derives an importance from the recital. Name the injuries which his country has received, his cheek glows with indignation, and he flies forth to meet the aggressor : mention the deed of shame in which she bore a part, he hangs his head, the conscious blush passes over his countenance ; it is the blush of shame. Rest in peace thou honest son of industry, and may the conscious blush again ne'er tinge thy cheek. Mayest thou enjoy the fruits of thy labour, and sacred may they remain. Nor shall thy hard earnings be applied to support an idle pageantry and a voluptuous court : for not such will be the consequence of an institution, form'd equally to promote your happiness and security.—May thy country still be dear, and long mayest thou remain her strength and pride.

"But it will involve us in all the maze of European politics."—In which instance, however, are we most likely to become dupes to the policy of other powers, in our separate capacity, or under the present system ? This question, from the observations which have been made, and others which will occur, admits of an easy solution. As distinct states we should neither maintain a dignity of conduct, or independence of character ; we should be the puppets of the play, play'd off against each other for the amusement of the performers, and to subserve the purposes of those concern'd in the management of the scene.

But here the appointment of Ambassadors, Placemen, and Pensioners, is like a heinous apparition, conjured up to disturb the disordered imaginations of these political knights-errant ; and which, Quixote like, they encounter with all fury and formality of the Wind-mill Brethren. Unfortunately for them,

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but fortunately for us, the reality does not exist under the present system : for the system has not begun its operation : and there is no clause providing that such an arrangement shall take place. The appointment of ambassadors and other officers will be under the direction of those whom we shall constitute, and will not take place but for the general good. If unnecessary offices have been establish'd, these may be abolish'd : and we trust in the wisdom and integrity of our Rulers, to lessen as much as possible, the burdens of the day ; and to guard against every unnecessary imposition.

The rapid progress of the states in improvements of every kind, the institution of cities, and the establishment of the Cincinnati, are likewise call'd forth from the dark cavern of jealousy and suspicion to frighten and intimidate the weak ; and with as much propriety and judgment as many silly people call on Grey-beard and Bloody-bones to frighten their children. Were such groundless apprehensions to govern our decision, we should endeavor to arrest the progress of every improvement, and relapse as soon as possible into a state of nature.—It is not the introduction of arts, it is not the progress of improvement which accelerates the ruin of kingdoms, and the dissolution of empires ; but these are their surest support. And in conformity to this sentiment, an observing foreigner speaking of the American Revolution remarks, That it exhibits at one point of view, the experience of age, with the honest energy of youth.

How the late institution of cities has or can prove unfavorable to liberty, except that of the bristly herd, I am unable to discover ; perhaps it was on that ground that the objection arose. How far the matchless pen of a ——— might be able to effect a revolution in favor of that much injured species of animals, I will not pretend to say. It would at least be employed with as little detriment to the peace and good order of society, as on some late occasions.

And why thou disciple of Edanus, this wanton attack on the members of a society, the idea of which is founded in patriotism and benevolence ? Is it their characters against which you object ? Their characters are as much above the shafts of your censure or calumny, as the utmost effort of my praise or approbation. Or would you wish Americans to revive the punishment of the Ostracism, and proscribe every virtue ?—This alas would be a cruel retribution for those services, by which they have established the freedom of their country, and their own immortal fame !

Is it the institution which you disapprove ? This is sacred to the offices of friendship and humanity.—After a series of services and common danger, the fatigues of which they had endured with a patient fortitude, & which had endeared them to each other ; might they not at the moment of separation indulge the sad, but soothing reflection,

reflection, that they should again meet, with at least some of the companions of their sufferings ? when they might renew the image of former days, or drop the tear of sympathy to the memory of those whose hearts no longer beat with the thrillings of social joy ; and who were no longer seen in the circle of the brave ! At the threshold of this institution stand benevolence and humanity, and cast the pitying eye and stretch the liberal hand to the necessitous, to the companion in want, to the widow, and to the orphan in distress.

Or is it the conduct of these which excites the censure ? “ I venerate,” says the same philanthropic foreigner, “ the soul of a WASHINGTON, that great man, whom our foolish opinions and ideas of false glory, have never led one step beyond that patriotic barrier which he had prescribed to himself : And who having drawn his sword to defend his country, had crown’d the durable pyramid of his immortal fame ; and raised his greatness to the most elevated pitch in the very act of abdicating it. He may be called the first of the American Cincinnati : I love the idea of this institution.”

It comprehends, in one view, the duty of the soldier, and the citizen, who when his country no longer calls, disclaims the profession of arms ; and in the retired walks of life, displays the same virtue which had distinguished the rougher scenes.—How far they have conform’d to the idea of the institution, and to the example of their great patron, let candour decide : and even prejudice must allow, that a parallel instance of decency, order, œconomy, and willing industry, in a disbanded army, cannot be adduced in the annals of history !

And suffer me now to address myself more particularly to you.—And do you really consider it, as such a misfortune to the country, that the new government was adopted before your return from Europe, and before you had an opportunity to give your opinion of its expediency ? Unhappy event ! But perhaps even this might not have varied the issue ; & to confess the truth, we do not see either in your arguments and deductions, or your mode of managing the subject, any very conclusive reasons to alter the decision. You set out with a pompous declaration of what you intend and promise something to astonish, and instruct, before you conclude. “ *Mons parturit*” let the discerning public determine, how far the sequel, is applicable to your performance.

With great frankness, and generosity you offer yourself to the opposition, with the modest reserve however, of guiding their measures, and heading the attack. But have a care, lest by aspiring too high, you raise jealousy in minds peculiarly inclined thereto. Nor have you established your claim to such a pre-eminence, by a long service, and a faithful adherence to their cause : And as yet they would hardly know where to find you, for it is problematical

mathematical from your premises and conclusions on which side the scale of your reasoning would preponderate; the purport and amount of which is, that the present system was formed by great and wise men, & ought therefore to be rejected; and that those only who are destitute of wisdom and ability, can be safely trusted;—that those who composed the late Convention, have served their country with fidelity, and therefore cannot be confided in—that the Society of the Cincinnati, is a dangerous institution, because composed of men to whom their country is under the highest obligation: that the federal system is unexceptionable, and therefore a dangerous conspiracy against the liberties of the people: and lastly, that the people have voluntarily adopted it, and are therefore opposed in heart and sentiment to it. In one line you arraign the constitution, and in the next propose to make it the most perfect system ever devised. Besides, you would make their heads giddy (for they are none of the steadiest) with your flights and bounds, and they might as well catch a goose-hawk on the wing, as follow you in your aerial excursions: In the midst of a pithy argument, you fly off in a tangent, with all the weight of logic on your shoulders, to take the gig of the spheres; which is begun with 'the little star, discover'd only by an Herschel's eye,' beyond the limits of space; and ended with her ladyship, 'the lazy satellite in the political hemisphere.' Altho' by such vagaries, you might equal the flights of a Sheridan, or a Burke, and show the agility of your imagination, it will not establish your character for solidity; and is a mere balloon experiment. Ballast, my friend, is necessary to balance, where fancy stands at helm.

While you arraign, at your mock tribunal, those who merit the love and esteem of all good men, and censure their measures without colour of argument, you discover a total want of sensibility of character, or decency of conduct; and insult the feelings and good sense of an audience, who have discovered their warmest approbation of both.

But this, you say, is conformable to your plan, and will excite that jealousy necessary to constitute your proposed check, which brings me to take some notice of your great political nostrum. And are you weak enough to suppose that any one will adopt an idea so ridiculous; or do you really hold to a position so absurd, as 'that to render perfect the operations of government, a constant opposition to the government itself is necessary, & that without a strong check, it will cease to exist?' To form this, do you propose to rein government, as you would rein an unruly horse, apprehensive, that like your own unbribed imagination, it would run wild into the unformed regions of chaos, unless yourself, with a sufficient number of sturdy patriots should hang hard on the halter? Or do you consider it as a building, and that it is necessary a part should constantly aim to destroy, to keep the others on their guard?

guard? But suppose these underminers should get slyly about their work—or suppose they should prove too strong for its supporters, must not your fabric fall?

It is contrary to the laws of motion, and to every principle of the mechanical powers, that matter should move more easily for obstruction. The political waggon would drag heavily thro' the dirt, with numbers working in each direction, and should those in the rear, prove too strong for their opponents, the machine itself must take a retrograde motion.—But there must be, it seems, an understanding that those in opposition should neither cut too fast, nor draw too hard. Ridiculous mammary! Childish play!

The charge brought against the good Doctor Adams, of repeatedly mentioning a balance, without proving its existence, may justly be retorted.—Your imaginary balance dances thro' every line, respecting which, you have hypothesiz'd without supporting, you have repeated, without proving, you have systematiz'd, without a system. You say that such a balance, or opposition exists in England, and in France; but it is not an opposition to government, but to the measures of government, or the measures of a ministry.—If it was an opposition to government, government would be destroyed, when Opposition prevail'd.—The government, however, subsists thro' every change of ministers and of measures: and how absurd the idea of an opposition, purchased by ministers, to oppose their own measures!

Were the government perfect, and the administration uniform and just, what necessity or ground of opposition? yet according to your paradox, if a government is perfect, we must oppose— if arbitrary in its principles and corrupt, by withdrawing all opposition, it will crumble to atoms, and cease to exist.—A position which confutes itself.

Many divines hold a bad principle, in opposition to a good principle requisite in the moral dispensation; and that Devils are necessary instruments in the Divine Government. If your opinion of an opposition to the good principle in civil administration, is derived from any supposed analogy between the moral, and political systems; it certainly evinc'd no small degree of fortitude, voluntarily to proffer yourself to be the chief of political Devils. As many, however, in Opposition, may not be fond of the distinction, I would propose, that you read another lecture, and that the subject be, *The necessity of political Devils, and that all who appear in that character, acquiesce in the appellation.*

The discussion of abler hands, and want of time precludes the necessity, and on this occasion prevents a more particular attention to the merits of the present system, the effects of which have been great and the influence propitious.—Its excellence like the force of truth, has been the more confirmed by enquiry—it has withstood the shock and surmounted the obstacles

of party, interest, and passion—the demagogue of Faction has bow'd his neck—it has swept away the wall of partition between the States—it has blended the views of all in one general object. And certainly the suffrages of an applauding continent are no inconsiderable criterion of its merit; for I revere, and shall always revere the sentiments of a people who are esteemed, and justly esteemed the most enlightened, and best informed, even in this enlightened age: and who have the sense to mark with silent contempt the incoherent rants, and ejaculations of expiring faction, tho' gloss'd by the specious pretext of zeal for their safety, aided by the pomp of sound, and enforced by the energy of theatrical gesture.

The thread-bare cant of the danger of trusting men with power which they will sooner or later inevitably pervert to the purposes of oppression, and of the tendency of all governments to despotism, would operate equally against every system, and deserves to be treated as the mere art of a popular declaimer, and raise himself to notice.

When, however the suggestions of danger come nearer, & it is alleged 'that Congress are by the present system invested with powers which they may abuse,' we are induced to observe, and the experience of mankind evinces, "that in all Democracies there is a tendency rather to anarchy in the members, than to tyranny in the head."—The factions of Carthage, prevented her furnishing Hannibal with necessary supplies, and saved the Roman power, the consequences of which were fatal to herself.—The popular influence in Rome, gain'd a continual ascendant.—The abolition of the regal authority, and the repeated diminutions of the rights and prerogatives of the nobles, and senate, were but so many sacrifices at the popular shrine, till at length the turbulence of faction rag'd without controul, and paved the way for the introduction of the Imperial power.—The People within the present age, have plucked many a darling gem from the crowns of their European Potentates.

It would be happy for mankind if they could live without the restraints of government.—It would likewise be happy if their temperance and health, and their disposition to rectitude, precluded the necessity of physical, or moral assistance: but while they are imperfect in their moral perceptions and natural habits, both the teacher & the physician are necessary; and while under the influence of interest, and passion, the restraint of law; and each of these are calculated to supply in some measure, the natural, the moral, and the political infirmity of mankind.

Every trust implies a risque, and it is in the power of each character above referred to, and of all in whom we confide, to abuse the confidence, if they will descend to the means, and treachery of such a conduct. And as the sole alternative to obviate the danger in the present instance, those should be selected and appointed

pointed to the offices of government, who may be safely intrusted with the great deposit; in which are involved the sacred rights of the people: whether such move in the vale of obscurity, or dazzle in the sun-shine of popularity.

The tissue, representing the history of the world, has a variegated appearance; it is shaded with the crimes of those who have perverted power to the most pernicious purposes: it is likewise irradiated with the virtues of such as have exerted this in the exercise of the most benign philanthropy, whereby they merited the esteem, and were the delights of mankind.

“This world 'tis true,

“Was made for Cæsar, but for Titus too.”

And may we not hope that such will be the bright assemblage exhibited in the part reserved for the history of this, and coming ages? It is a grateful reflection, and the progress which mankind are making in every improvement, as well as the assurance of Inspiration, justify the flattering wish——

It is ours to decide, whether the pleasing prospects entertain'd in consequence of the present system, shall be realiz'd, or not: and whether we shall bless, or reprobate the day of its adoption—for much remains to be done. Industry, œconomy, and a true spirit of patriotism can alone retrieve the distresses of our situation, and relieve us from the burdens under which we labour, in consequence of a heavy and ruinous war. And it is above all, incumbent on us to appoint faithful watchmen on the walls of our Jerusalem! Many are plotting to counteract the beneficial influence of every measure.—Certainly stronger motives could never operate on the minds of Rulers, and induce to an unwearied, and self-devoted application to the duties of their appointment, than at the present crisis. We have been witnesses to scenes peculiarly striking, and which lead to others still more important and decisive.—The attention of mankind is fixed on the event, and the happiness of numbers exceeding the powers of conception, depends on the issue. How unfortunate! should they by an ill-judged exertion of the prerogatives with which they are necessarily invested, excite the spirit of discontent; cloud the prospect; & disappoint so fair a hope?—Let them pursue the golden mean which we have always pursued, and then in return we can assure them of the affection, and gratitude of a people, who by a chearful, and ready compliance with the necessary requirements of government, will still further promote the happy effects of a system, which we fondly flatter ourselves will continually progress towards perfection, and fix at length the civil compact ‘on the broad basis of reason.’

“O Thou! by whose almighty nod the scale

Of empire rises or alternate falls,

Send forth thy saving Virtues round the land

In bright patrol; white peace and social Love;

The

The tender-looking charity, intent
 On gentle deeds, and shedding tears thro' smiles ;
 Undaunted Truth, and Dignity of Mind ;
 Courage compos'd and keen ; sound Temperance,
 Healthful in heart and look ; clear Chastity,
 With blushes redd'ning as she moves along ;
 Disorder'd at the deep regard she draws ;
 Rough Industry ; Activity untir'd,
 With copious life inform'd, and all awake ;
 While in the radiant front superior shines
 That first paternal virtue, Public Zeal,
 Who throws o'er all an equal wide survey,
 And ever musing on the common weal
 Still labours, glorious, with some great design."

VILE SOLUM SPARTO EST, ALTE, CECIDERE MYCENÆ,
OEDIPODIONÆ QUID SUNT, NISI NOMINA, THEBÆ?
QUID PANDONIÆ RESTANT, NISI NOMEN ATHENÆ?

Ovid.

AS round in annual course, revolv'd the spheres,
For a long space, of near six thousand years;
Wrapt in oblivious night, from reason's day;
This mighty scene, of future empires lay.
And when reveal'd, taught Eastern Worlds to own,
Nature had here her fairest semblance shown.

From those bleak coasts, which point th' adventurer's way,
Who first thro' these salutes, the Eastern day,
To where the Pole, thro' half the the changing year,
In darkness wrapt, points to the Northern bear;
Columbia shares each clime: the Asian shore,
She hails; and hears the hoarse Atlantic roar.
Here Andes rise, high tow'ring to the sky;
While Europe's Alps, like little hillocks lie.
Lawrence, and Amazones here roll their tide,
Volga, and Danube, there, like streamlets glide.
The Condor here extends his tow'ring wing;
Of all the feather'd race, the acknowledg'd king.
What fabl'd stories tell of monsters vast,
Is in the Mammoth's mighty form surpass.
No pestilential blast, here taints the blood,
No dread volcanos roll, the fiery flood.
Earthquakes less frequent, rock the trembling ground;
And here, less dreadful, their effects are found.
No forms despotic, here, the mind controul,
No bigot zeal, inthrals the expanded soul.
But Freedom fair, her banners wide unfurl'd,
To share these blessings, now invites the world.
Fair Freedom here, with social bliss combin'd;
Sound Reason temper'd; late instructs mankind.

Let us, my Friends, with retrospective view,
Her various stages, and her paths pursue:
See how true happiness, alike refrains,
From lawless Licence, and from Tyrants' chains.
And shew how Freedom's Sons, her dome should rear;
And how each virtue claims alliance there.

When Belus first, and Ninus then aspir'd,
To lawless sway, with proud ambition fir'd:
And taught the Asian race, to wear the chain:
Freedom retires, nor visits these again.
With sable Hordes she moves, thro' Scythian wilds;
At her approach, the dreary prospect smiles:
Europe immers'd, in ignorance awhile,
Resists fair science, and defeats her toil:

Yet

Yet there at length, she fix'd her fav'rite seat;
There wandering Freedom found a short retreat.

The Grecian story, and the Roman page,
The glories paint, of each successive age.
And when we see, those fav'rite seats the prey
Of lawless pow'--where Ignorance holds their sway;
Anxious we seek, the fatal cause to know:
The cause from whence these mighty mischiefs flow.

To partial policy, Greece fell a prey;
Each sep'rate State aspir'd to sov'reign sway,
While factions rose, with a tumultuous wave,
Her sons, alas! were to her ruin brave.
With freedom's banners, they for slav'ry fought,
And each achievement, sure destruction brought.
'Gainst foreign powers, the firm confederate band,
Resistless rise, to guard their natal land;
These dangers past, with equal rage they burn,
And on themselves, their conquering falchions turn.
No ge'ral power to guard, the gen'ral good;
In shapes ten thousand, scream the Harpy brood!
Blood flows in torrents, and the Furies hiss!
Then save, oh! save us, from a scene like this!

In sep'rate states, Ausonia first appears;
Till Rome her head, above her equals rears;
She then displays, her golden ensigns high;
Yet shouts aloud, for glorious Liberty!
Her boasts of Freedom, were an empty name;
'Twas lust of thralldom, and 'twas lust of fame.
When o'er the world she wav'd her banners proud,
And reams submissive, at her footstool bow'd;
Peace she proclaim'd, and Freedom still her boast:
That Peace and Freedom which the world had lost.
With blood, and carnage gorg'd, to lust a prey,
Feeble, and swollen, her bulk enormous lay.
Like Vultures eager, from the Northern hive,
Hordes rise on Hordes, and to the carnage drive.
With tenfold horrors, see Bellona stride!
Famines and Plagues, attendant at her side;
Convulsions dread, earth, sea, and ether rend!
Obsequies dire---her requiem!--attend!

States form'd in wrong, shall with such pangs expire:
Then save, oh save us from the restless fire!
Ambition here, there discords drear ascend
And each fair scene, in one destruction blend.

Thick clouds, and dark, involve the welkin round:
'Twas now the reign, of Ignorance profound.

Freedom expell'd, a fugitive again;
Seeks her last refuge, o'er the Western main.
Long with her savage sons, the forest rang'd:
From Science long, and ev'ry Art estrang'd.
Yet drops the tear, impatient for the time,
When these, and Commerce, in this Western clime:
Should rise with fame, exceeding all the past;
And fix an Empire, which with time should last!

Tho' dangers wait---yet tow'ring to the skies,
Rear'd by her Sons, shall Freedom's Dome arise.

A single column first, salutes the day ;
 And Public Spirit, was its only stay.
 But this decreas'd, fell Discord's billows roll ;
 And private views, the public good controul.
 Revolting armies, and revolting states,
 Rebellious subjects, warm'd with dire debates,
 From different views, in gen'ral concert join :
 Anarch their head, confusion their design.
 'Twas then fair Freedom's totter'd to its base ;
 And Anarch's column, tower'd in its place.

Freedom again, a fugitive had fled,
 But those who oft, had counsel'd, and had bled,
 For her-----convene, the patriot plan they form ;
 To guide the tempest, and restrain the storm.

And when the Hero, and illustrious Band,
 The Scroll presenting, to Columbia stand :
 " Accept the civic Crown, which pleas'd I give ;"
 She adds---" and deathless may your honors live."

True to their cause, still Anarch, and his train,
 Oppose its progress ; but oppose in vain.
 For him Suspicion ope'd her cavern wide ;
 Forth from the gloom, ten thousand phantoms glide :
 But when Columbia, thus indignant spoke,
 The airy phantoms, vanish'd in a smoke.

" My sons, what madness guides your councils, say,
 Where each dear object, interdicts delay ?
 Here safety dwells ; and this secures your rights ;
 Here public peace, and happiness unites."

Instructed thus, their ready voice is given,
 With joint applause, thro' trembling ether driven.

Freedom no more, a wandering vagrant strays ;
 But fix'd in glory, points to future days.
 Where Hudson rolls his stream, and where he meets
 His hoary Sire ; a lovely landscape greets,
 Th' admiring eye : There freedom's Dome begun,
 Expands its portals ; and salutes the Sun !
 Peace, Wealth, and social Joy, each blest the land ;
 And Commerce, active on the busy strand :
 Bright scenes arise ! assembling nations claim,
 To share the blessings, and partake the fame !

---Admiring angels stoop from Heaven to hear !
 While this glad voice, assails th' enraptur'd ear,
 Joy to the world ! fell discord now shall cease ;
 Freedom and Arts prevail ; hail universal Peace !
 Hail universal Peace ! the skies redound !
 While countless Myriads, echo back the sound !

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A single column and salute the day;
 And public spirit was its early day.
 But this day, tell Dillmore's bitter roll;
 And give views, the public and controul.
 Revolting armies, and revolting hosts;
 Rebellion's subjects, warring with due hosts;
 From different views, in general concert join;
 Anarch their hands, contention their design.
 'Twas then that Freedom's tower'd to its peak;
 And Anarch's column, tower'd in its place.
 Freedom again, a fugitive had fled,
 But those who oft, had conquer'd, and had led;
 For her-----conquer, the patriot plan they form;
 To guide the rampart, and restrain the storm.
 And when the hero, and illustrious band,
 The school presiding, to Columbia stand;
 "Accept the civic crown, which pleads I give;"
 She adds---"and deck'd with your honors live."
 True to their cause, all Anarch, and his train,
 Oppose his progress; but oppose in vain.
 For him suspicion open'd her cavern wide;
 Forth from the gloom, ten thousand phantoms glide;
 But when Columbia, thus indignantly spoke,
 The airy phantoms, vanish'd in a smoke.
 "My tears, what manner guides your council, say;
 Where each dear object, interdicts delay;
 Here safety dwells; and, this secures your rights;
 Here public peace, and happiness unites."
 Instructed thus, their ready voice is given,
 With joint applause, they, crowding their domain,
 Freedom no more, a wandering vagrant stray;
 But fix'd in glory, points to future day.
 Where Freedom roll, tell Dillmore, and where he meets
 His heavy fate; a lonely land, no guests.
 Th' admiring eyes, that gaze on Freedom's dome, began
 Expand its portals; and the sun
 Peace, Wealth, and joy, each bless the land;
 And Commerce, active on the busy strand;
 Bright fountains gush'd! alluring nations claim;
 To feast the plough, and pasture the tame;
 ---A building rose, as soon from Heaven to part;
 While this glad voice, shall all the country cart,
 Joy to the world! all distant new shall come;
 Freedom and Arts prevail; all universal Peace!
 Shall universal Peace! the bliss redound!
 While countless Myriads, come back the found!

